

June 18, 2009

STENEHJEM TO ATTEND TRI-NATIONAL DRUG MEETING Italy Hosting Discussions to Combat Organized Crime

BISMARCK – Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem will join officials from three nations in discussions on efforts to combat organized crime.

At the invitation of the Conference of Western Attorneys General (CWAG), Stenehjem will accompany a delegation of Mexican Attorneys General and Italian prosecutors to Rome, Palermo and Calabria, Italy, for a weeklong conference to discuss efforts to battle organized crime. Stenehjem arrives in Rome on June 23, 2009, for the conference.

Stenehjem has been active with other CWAG members working with his counterparts from Mexico as they struggle in the battle against the drug cartels and work to restructure Mexico's judicial system.

Stenehjem has met regularly with other US and Mexican Attorneys General and was part of a delegation that travelled to Mexico City in September 2007. He also met with Canadian officials in 2005 regarding cross-border drug efforts.

"Drugs and organized crime go hand in hand. While North Dakota has far less organized crime activity than other states, our state sees the end result of the activities of the drug cartels. Most of the illegal drugs that reach North Dakota come from these operations, especially those operating out of Mexico," Stenehjem said. "Every day on the news we learn of the horrific toll the drug cartels are taking in Mexico. It is clearly in the interest of our country to do everything we can to help eradicate this problem."

Also attending the tri-national meetings are the attorneys general of New Mexico and Idaho. The US Agency for International Development is paying the costs associated with the travel.

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